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Q

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ALBUMS

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BEENIE MAN

OCTOBER 2002 £3.30

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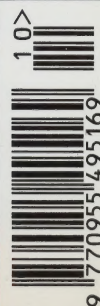


PLUS DOVES GO TO JAIL!

SPRINGSTEEN PLAYS FOR Q!

NICKELBACK EAT WORLD!

THE VINES GO MAD IN HOLLYWOOD





Beck
His moody reinvention
New LPs **p98**



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Sneak tour preview!
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REVIEW

October
2002

Your Essential Entertainment Guide ★★★★★

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feels for the Taliban **p106**

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graces chill-out record **p104**

Enter the **Nickelback**
clones **p104/p118**

Rampant!

The Vines get to know America **p152**

Easy Craig, not the drum kit...

Demolition Men

The spaced-out grunge worshippers lay waste to America.

CRAIGNICHOLLS is on edge, a familiar state for The Vines' frontman. Earlier today he spotted two beautiful girls who'd been following him for the last few dates of the band's American tour. "I haven't had a shower for three days, so I really smell," Nicholls says, seemingly bemused by the attention, tugging intently on a cigarette. What this supposedly tortured soul doesn't mention is that he has already spent several days getting acquainted with these same girls in a Seattle hotel room.

However, Nicholls's companions aren't the only people waiting outside the Roxy this afternoon. Several hundred kids will wait hours on the off-chance of returns for this sold-out show. Sandra Bullock (seemingly rock's new Winona) has been on the phone for tickets and, with the band slated for the cover of Rolling Stone and new single Get Free picking up hefty airplay, there's a notable sense of event. "It's very encouraging," says Nicholls, "it's really fun", his strangled Antipodean vowels turning the word into "fon".

How tangible does their success feel? "It means we can buy more cars and go and drink champagne," he says. He pauses and

looks back from his habitual middle-distance. "Not that I drive. Or drink." Er, cheers.

Nicholls's bemusement is a state of being. Where the real world exists for him at all — interviews, plane journeys, girls — it's as a frustrating intrusion into his internal musical world. At one point he says, "I'm thinking about nothing at all because the songs are on another dimension and that's where I spend all my time." You have to ask whether, as a notorious bong-practitioner, Nicholls is simply stoned. He looks up out of his daze. "People are always asking me if I'm on drugs. I suppose what for me is normal is odd for other people."

While "odd" is undoubtedly the word, Nicholls is hardly the car crash of repute. Almost all his strange behaviour has come down simply to his unwillingness to leave his musical bubble. The time he locked himself in a hotel room in LA for several weeks? He didn't want to stop recording the album. A much-reported anxiety attack before the Coachella Festival in Palm Springs? Desperate to record new songs for the second album, he simply couldn't comprehend why the record company wouldn't let him.

The Vines

The Roxy,
Los Angeles

9 August 2002

OUTTATNAWAY
AUTUMN SHADE
HIGHLY EVOLVED
JES JACKSON
GET FREE
MARY JANE

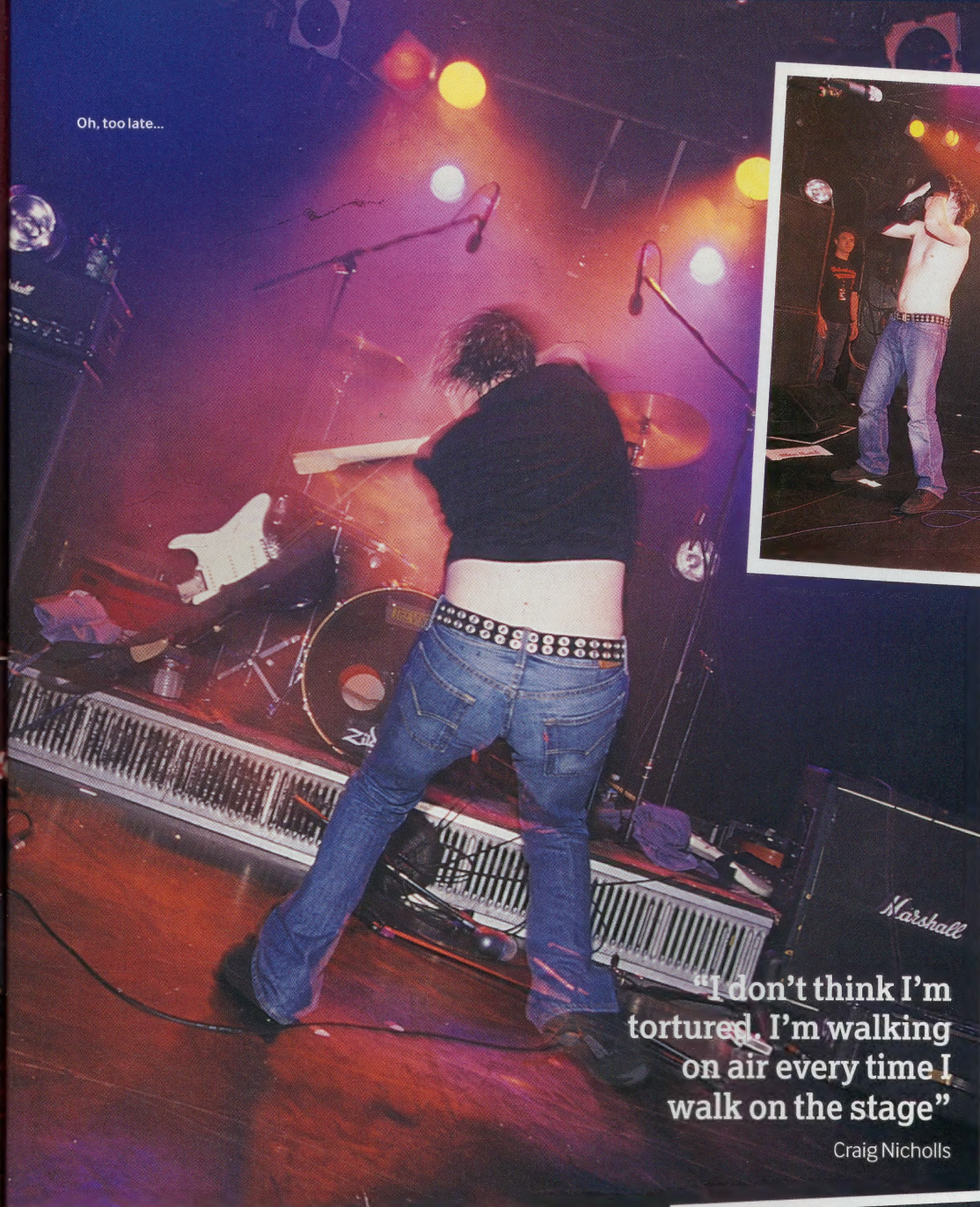
AIN'T NO ROOM
COUNTRY YARD
1969
HOMEICK
IN THE JUNGLE
BAPTISTS
FUCK THE WORLD

The set list:
note anguished
final song.



Craig Nicholls: nice "Aussie Rules" vest.

Oh, too late...



"I don't think I'm tortured. I'm walking on air every time I walk on the stage"

Craig Nicholls

"I don't think I'm tortured," he insists. "I'm really happy doing music. I'm walking on air every time I walk on to the fucking stage. We're going to make a second album, we have to do it, man. I've got so many songs... I don't think we're going to implode," he adds.

That's a rather vague rebuttal.

He shrugs. "All this speculation about my mental state is a bit invasive. I've never been an upbeat, going-out-all-the-time kind of guy. I wanted something more than having fun. Something with no boundaries."

How do you feel about being constantly likened to another person who wasn't really into "having fun", Kurt Cobain?

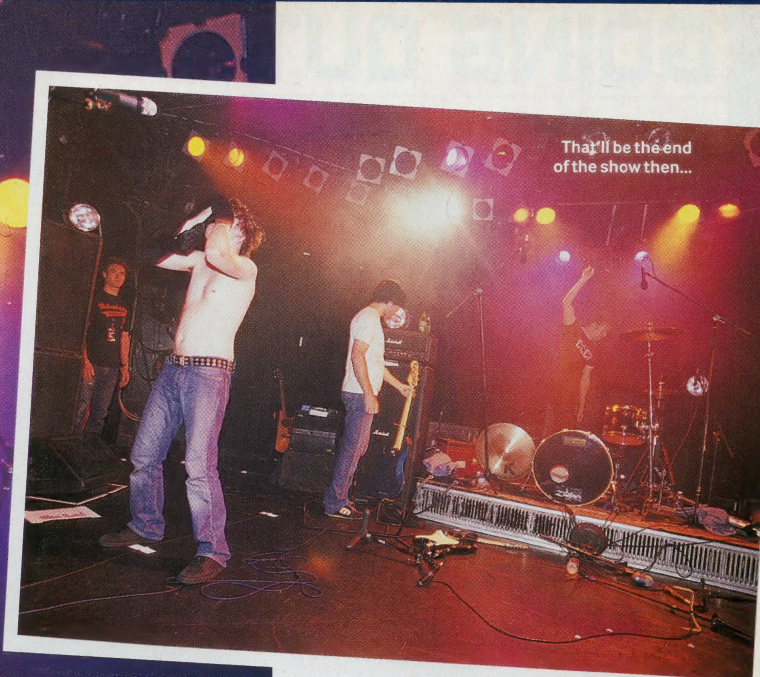
"The Nirvana comparisons are a real compliment. We're incredibly influenced by them. But I don't think suicide is a good thing. I don't want to do that to myself. I don't want to blow my brains out when there's great things all around, mystical hidden worlds. I'm not going to do a Kurt Cobain."

If there was ever any doubt over how perfectly fitted The Vines are to this precise moment in musical history, tonight's performance erases it in a flash. In a packed, sweltering club, they encompass all that is good about contemporary music, providing

something for every type and taste. For the baggy-shortened altno-rockers, there's the Nirvana-esque Outtathaway and current single Get Free which, if it were any more US radio-friendly, would be booked for harassment. For post-Strokes new-wave fans, there's Highly Evolved and Sunshinin'. For Coldplay-loving sensitive souls there's Mary Jane and Homesick. "It's like flying through space, listening to our records," Nicholls will say later.

The Beatles is the other critical touchstone commonly applied to The Vines and, live, Nicholls owes more to Macca than Cobain. It's there in his ability to morph his vocals to suit the song, whether screaming on Outtathaway, doing a Prince-style falsetto squeal on a brave cover of OutKast's Ms Jackson or essaying perfect Beatles harmonies with bassist Patrick Matthews on Autumn Shade.

Nicholls looks ecstatic throughout, his eyes rolling into their sockets, a private, beatific smile on his face. Matthews,



That'll be the end of the show then...

meanwhile, has his own fan club. "Patrick! Over here!" girls scream from every corner.

The show's intensity doesn't flag for a second. Highly Evolved's final track, 1969, has become a full-scale group workout and, during the solo, Nicholls puts his guitar behind his head in rock crucifixion pose before mounting the drum riser and swaying precariously. For closer Fuck The World, the drum kit is again the focus of Nicholls's attention. Indeed, drummer Hamish Rosser looks distinctly nervous as Nicholls lurches towards him, swinging his guitar and swiping at the kit. Rosser soldiers on but, as the kit topples, he's left thrashing his sticks at thin air. Nicholls tries to pull off his shirt and looks about to follow the drum kit to the floor before abruptly striding offstage. Needless to say, with half the band's equipment in ruins, there's no encore.

In the dressing room afterwards, the other band members' presence only serves to highlight Nicholls's oddity. The more worldly Matthews acts as ballast, occasional co-writer, fast food purchaser and part-time Nicholls-handler. And while second guitarist Ryan Griffiths (who, contrary to some reports, did not quit the US tour in a flap) is visually cut from the frontman's cloth, drummer Rosser is a proper, XXXX Aussie who quickly departs for the free beer at the aftershow.

Nicholls is now in an uncharacteristic state of energised spaced-outness. "I tried to set the drum kit on fire tonight, but I forgot to bring lighter fuel or hairspray so it didn't catch properly. We need to get some fireworks for the next show. I think they're legal in America."

Does Matthews ever worry about Nicholls's onstage antics? "No, cos I hardly ever get hit," says the amiable bassist. "Hamish is the focus of most of it."

"I'd be upset if Hamish actually got hurt though," interrupts Nicholls. "I lose sight momentarily but, like when you're skateboarding and you want to reach something and not be restricted in any way, I get carried away with music."

So carried away, in fact, that while the aftershow rages on next door Nicholls is still in the dressing room talking to anyone who'll listen about the songs he's written for their fourth album. Eyes glazed, he's back in that other dimension, where the songs live.

Toby Manning



The Vines: (from left) Hamish Rosser, Craig Nicholls, Ryan Griffiths and Patrick Matthews.



**The Vines, mk 1,
featuring David
Olliffe (centre).**



It's Debatable!

Last month we asked:

Dear Q,
**Re: The Vines article,
July 2002**

I wish to retract my comments relating to Rob Schnapf as they were blatantly offensive and ill considered. I take full responsibility for the problems encountered in the studio, as I buckled

under the pressure. My main gripe concerned the re-recording of Get Free and The Factory, which I believed to be cynical, unnecessary and ultimately demoralising. I think Rob did a great job on the record, and should be commended for his work under trying circumstances. Again I offer a sincere apology to Rob.

David Olliffe, via e-mail

■ Readers! Have you ever slandered someone unnecessarily in the pages of an international music magazine? Write in, and heal those tender wounds.